

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PRS-01 USIA-15 /027 R

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APPROVED BY: ARA/PAF:PENIEBURG
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R 311549Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO ALL EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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FOLLOWING SENT ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS, USUN,
USCINCSO FROM SECSTATE DATED 31 JULY:

QUOTE UNCLAS STATE 180425

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XR (OAS/CU)

SUBJECT: OAS ACTION ON CUBA

FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT STATE DEPARTMENT NOON
BRIEFING JULY 30 CONCERNING THE SAN JOSE MEETING:

Q: BOB, WHAT IS OUR ATTITUDE GOING TO BE TOWARD CUBA NOW
THAT THE OAS HAS FREED EACH NATION FROM THE FORMER
EMBARGO?

A: AS YOU KNOW, THE ACTION THAT WAS TAKEN IN SAN JOSE
YESTERDAY FREES EACH COUNTRY TO DECIDE THE QUESTION OF THE
NATURE OF ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH CUBA. WITH REGARD
TO OUR ATTITUDE, YOU GO BACK TO THE SECRETARY'S MARCH 1
SPEECH IN HOUSTON. MORE RECENTLY THE PRESIDENT, I THINK,
LAST WEEK, IN TALKING WITH SOME JOURNALISTS, SAID THAT
WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE HOW THE CUBANS
INTERPRET THIS AND WHETHER THEY WILL SHOW SOME REAL CHANGE
IN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UNITED STATES.

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WE ARE FULLY PREPARED TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CUBANS ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY. BUT I DON'T THINK IT WOULD BE PROPER AT THIS TIME FOR ME TO GET INTO SPECIFICS. BUT I'M NOT REALLY GIVING YOU ANYTHING NEW HERE. WE ARE PREPARED TO TALK, AND WE WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE CUBAN REACTION IS GOING TO BE, IF THEY WISH TO GET INTO DISCUSSIONS. BUT WE ARE NOT RULING IT OUT AT ALL.

Q: ARE YOU RULING OUT UNILATERAL ACTION BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO ASK CONGRESS TO LIFT THE TRADE EMBARGO?

A: I WOULD RULE THAT OUT, YES, BECAUSE, AS I SAID EARLIER, WE HAVE TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS. WE ARE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CUBANS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ISSUES THAT, OBVIOUSLY, WOULD HAVE TO BE AND SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT ANY TIME THAT WE DO HAVE THESE DISCUSSIONS. ONE OF THE ISSUES, OBVIOUSLY, WOULD BE THE ISSUE OF SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA. THAT IS WHY I GAVE THE CATEGORICAL ANSWER WITH REGARD TO ANY UNILATERAL ACTION BY US.

Q: CAN YOU SAY WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES YOU HAVE TO DISCUSS WITH CUBA IF AND WHEN THOSE DISCUSSIONS START?

A: I DO NOT REALLY WANT TO GET INTO ALL THE DETAILS BUT, YOU KNOW, THERE IS THE QUESTION OF REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES, THERE IS COMPENSATION TO AMERICAN FIRMS, AND AMERICAN PRISONERS THAT ARE STILL BEING HELD. THERE ARE A WHOLE WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES, AND I THINK THAT THE WAY TO GO ABOUT THIS, TO TRY AND BE AS PRODUCTIVE AS POSSIBLE, IS TO TRY AND SIT DOWN AND HAVE PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CUBANS AND NOT HAVE ME DOING IT FROM UP HERE--OR, ON THE CUBAN SIDE, TO TRY AND MAKE PUBLIC PROCLAMATIONS ON THESE ISSUES.

IF WE WANT TO BE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS TO TRY AND MAKE PROGRESS, IT IS BETTER TO DO IT PRIVATELY. THAT IS WHY I DON'T WANT TO DO IT.

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Q: IS THAT BEING DONE?

Q: WILL YOU WAIT FOR THE CUBANS TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE ON THIS, OR WHAT WILL BE THE BASIS FOR APPROACH OF TALKING TO THEM?

A: I CANNOT TELL YOU WHO WILL MAKE THE FIRST MOVE. THE CUBANS KNOW THAT THERE ARE ESTABLISHED CHANNELS TO GET IN

TOUCH WITH US. WE HAVE SAID PUBLICLY--THE PRESIDENT HAS AND THE SECRETARY--THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS EXCHANGES. I REPEATED THAT TODAY.

I JUST CANNOT BE SPECIFIC, HENRY.

YES, SIR?

Q: WELL, WHAT IS DIFFERENT THEN? WHAT HAS CHANGED INSOFAR AS THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE IS CONCERNED AFTER YESTERDAY'S VOTE? YOU HAVE BEEN PREPARED FOR SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS FOR MONTHS NOW. YOU HAVE NOW COME PUBLICLY TO A POSITION WHERE EACH GOVERNMENT CAN DO AS IT LIKES, AND YET YOU IMMEDIATELY RULE OUT A UNILATERAL STEP BY THE UNITED STATES THAT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH LAST NIGHT'S VOTE.

A: I DO NOT THINK--FRANKLY, MARVIN--THAT A UNILATERAL STEP WAS EVER ENVISAGED, AND MY SAYING THIS TODAY IS NOT NEWS IN ANY WAY.

I THINK THAT ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF THE ACTION THAT WAS TAKEN YESTERDAY IS THAT WITHIN THE OAS NOW A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE HAS BEEN REMOVED. NOW EACH COUNTRY THAT IS A MEMBER OF THE OAS CAN DO WHAT IT WISHES WITH REGARD TO ITS RELATIONS WITH CUBA, AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT FROM NOW ON, WITH THIS ISSUE REMOVED, THE OAS CAN CONCENTRATE ON SOME OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING ALL OF US ON THE AMERICAN CONTINENT IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER QUESTIONS. I THINK THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST HEARTENING THINGS THAT HAPPENED WITH REGARD TO THIS RESOLUTION THAT WAS PASSED.

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Q: BOB, YOU --

A: INCIDENTALLY, I THINK IT WAS 16, ACTUALLY.

Q: YOU LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU ARE LESS THAN EAGER TO RENEW TIES WITH CUBA, AND I WONDER IF IT'S A FAIR INFERENCE THAT YOU STILL SEE SOMETHING ABOUT RELATIONS WITH CUBA THAT MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO THE UNITED STATES?

A: I DO NOT THINK THAT IS THE QUESTION. I AM NOT TRYING TO BE OVERLY EAGER OR LESS EAGER. I AM JUST TRYING TO, IN ESSENCE --

Q: YOU WON'T MAKE A MOVE, SO THAT IT'S CLEARLY SOMETHING YOU DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT HAVING.

A: I AM NOT SAYING THAT WE WON'T MAKE A MOVE. HENRY ASKED ME: "WHO'S GOING TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE?" IDON'T KNOW WHO'S GOING TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

WE HAVE SAID WE ARE PREPARED; I WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE COMING MONTHS. I DON'T KNOW WHEN; I DON'T KNOW WHERE; I DON'T KNOW BETWEEN WHOM. BUT I JUST GO BACK TO WHAT I SAID EARLIER: THAT WE ARE FULLY PREPARED TO HAVE SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CUBAN AUTHORITIES IF THEY WISH TO HAVE SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH US--BECAUSE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS, AND I MENTIONED SOME OF THEM HERE, THAT SHOULD BE RESOLVED IF WE ARE GOING TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP THAT WE HAVE HAD OVER THE LAST 15 OR SO YEARS.

Q: HAS THIS WILLINGNESS TO HAVE SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CUBANS BEEN CONVEYED TO THE CUBANS?

A: I DO NOT SEE HOW THEY COULD HELP BUT KNOW THIS. I ASSUME THAT THEY READ THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH. THE PRESIDENT HAS ADDRESSED IT ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS.

NOW, WHETHER THIS HAS BEEN SENT VIA THE SWISS EMBASSY IN HAVANA IN A PRIVATE COMMUNICATION, IN A NOTE OR SOMETHING, THAT I DO NOT KNOW.
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Q: I'M NOT QUITE SURE I UNDERSTAND THAT POSITION. YOU KEEP SAYING THAT THE PUBLIC PLATFORM SHOULD NOT BE THE FORUM FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CUBANS. AND THEN WHEN WE ASK: "HOW ARE THEY TO KNOW WHAT OUR POLICY IS?" YOU SAY, "WELL, THEY SHOULD READ IT IN THE PAPERS AND SEE ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH."

A: NO; I'M NOT SAYING THAT, LARS. THERE ARE MANY OUTSTANDING ISSUES. I DO NOT WANT TO GET INTO ALL OF THEM JUST FOR THIS REASON, BECAUSE I THINK WE OUGHT TO SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS THEM SERIOUSLY. THE FACT THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO HAVE THESE SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WE HAVE SAID PUBLICLY MANY TIMES, AND I AM JUST REPEATING IT HERE.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING IN THE PREVIOUS POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT WHICH MAKES YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ANY SORT OF MOVE EXPECTED FROM THEM WHICH COULD INITIATE THOSE SERIOUS TALKS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?

A: WELL, THEY HAVE MADE SOME GESTURES, AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT IN THE PAST AND, AS I MENTIONED EARLIER,

THE PRESIDENT SAID, AS RECENTLY AS LAST WEEK. SO I THINK WE ARE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE CUBAN REACTION IS TO THE OAS VOTE AND SEE IF THEY WISH TO ENTER-TAIN THE THOUGHT OF HAVING SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS. I HOPE THEY WILL.

Q: DID SOUTHERN AIRWAYS EVER GET THE TWO MILLION DOLLARS?

A: I WILL HAVE TO CHECK. I KNOW THAT SOME PROGRESS WAS MADE IN TRYING TO GET THEM TOGETHER, BUT I DO NOT KNOW THE DETAILS. I WILL LOOK INTO THAT.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING NEW ON CASTRO'S PROPOSAL FOR AN EXCHANGE OF ATHLETIC TEAMS?

A: I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT, NO. I DO NOT THINK THERE IS ANYTHING NEW AT THIS TIME. INGERSOLL UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, SANCTIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE180425
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA/PAF:PENIEBURG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750265-0363
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975073/aaaaacrk.tel
Line Count: 239
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <05 FEB 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OAS ACTION ON CUBA FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT STATE DEPARTMENT NOON
TAGS: PFOR, XR, CU, OAS
To: EUR
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006